

**EUGENE, OR**—U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio is pleased to announce that Lane Transit District's (LTD) Pioneer Parkway Emerald Express (EmX) BRT will receive \$14.8 million in fiscal year 2007, one year earlier than expected. The Department of Transportation (DOT) approved the funding today for the LTD project through a new "Small Starts" program. The Small Starts program, a new transit program, was created in the 2005 highway and transit reauthorization bill, SAFETEA-LU to help level the playing field for transit projects in smaller communities. DeFazio and several other representatives worked to establish the Small Starts Program, and the Pioneer Parkway EmX extension is one of the first projects funded through the program.

"The Pioneer Parkway EmX extension, which will link downtown Springfield with the RiverBend Hospital and the Gateway area, will be a great addition to the newly opened Franklin line connecting downtown Eugene and Springfield," DeFazio said. "I am proud that it's the first project approved for the Small Starts program, which I helped create. EmX represents the type of project Small Starts was created to fund—a meaningful, yet affordable transit project that works for a smaller community." Springfield Mayor Sid Leiken commented, "The EmX Pioneer Parkway extension will improve transportation options to Gateway area of Springfield, providing better access to our major employment centers. This is yet another example of government partnerships delivering for our citizens."

The project is expected to cost \$36.99 million. The extension will serve an anticipated 3,700 daily passengers when it is scheduled to open in 2010.